

Message Text

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UNCLAS STATE 115217

FOR ASST. SEC. RICHARD HOLBROOKE

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, VM, US

SUBJECT: PRESSCOVERAGE OF HUMPHREY-HUNG TRIAL

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF MAY 5 WASHINGTON STAR ARTICLE HEAD-
LINED "DEFENSE ATTACKS DOCUMENTS' VALUE IN VIET SPY CASE."

BEGIN TEXT:

DEFENSE ATTORNEY IN THE ESPIONAGE TRIAL OF RONALD HUMPHREY
AND DAVID TRUONG HAVE SOUGHT TO CAST DOUBT ON THE REAL
VALUE OF DOCUMENTS ALLEGEDLY TRANSMITTED TO VIETNAM AND ON
THE CLAIM THAT THEIR TRANSMISSION WOULD HAVE DAMAGED THE
NATIONAL SECURITY OF THE UNITED STATES.

HUMPHREY, A FORMER U.S. INFORMATION AGENCY EMPLOYEE, AND
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TRUONG, A NATIVE OF VIETNAM, ARE ON TRIAL IN U.S. DISTRICT
COURT IN ALEXANDRIA ON SEVEN CHARGES OF CONSPIRACY AND
ESPIONAGE.

MARK FOSTER, WHO REPRESENTS HUMPHREY, QUESTIONED FBI
SPECIAL AGENT DONALD MARSLAND YESTERDAY. MARSLAND TESTIFIED
THAT A STATE DEPARTMENT "DAMAGE ESTIMATE" CONCLUDED THERE

WAS LITTLE OF A SENSITIVE NATURE IN 61 OF THE CABLES.
MARSLAND SAID THAT THE "DAMAGE ESTIMATE" WAS MADE BY JAMES ROSENTHAL, THEN THE STATE DEPARTMENT'S COUNTRY DIRECTOR FOR VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA.

DEFENSE ATTORNEY MICHAEL E. TIGAR, WHO REPRESENTS TRUONG, SAID, "IF THE DAMAGE ESTIMATE WAS ACCURATE, THAT MEANS THE CASE WASN'T AS IMPORTANT AS YOU (THE FBI) THOUGHT IT WAS."

THE FBI MAN SAID HE ASKED THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE A NEW EVALUATION OF THE DAMAGE TO U.S. FOREIGN RELATIONS, AND THAT SEVERAL NEW "DAMAGE ESTIMATES" WERE MADE.

THESE DAMAGE ESTIMATES HAVE NOT BEEN MADE PUBLIC BUT SOME OF THE NATURE OF THE CABLES WAS REVEALED IN CROSS-EXAMINATION.

THE VALUE FACTOR OF THE DOCUMENTS SENT TO THE VIETNAMESE WOULD BE IMPORTANT IF HUMPHREY, 42 AND TRUONG, 32, WERE FOUND GUILTY. FEDERAL LAW CALLS FOR PUNISHMENT OF UP TO TWO YEARS IN PRISON AND A FINE OF 10,000 DOLS IF THE DOCUMENTS INVOLVED ARE WORTH MORE THAN 100 DOLS. BUT FOR PROPERTY VALUED AT LESS THAN 100 DOLS, THE MAXIMUM PENALTY WOULD BE ONE YEAR AND A 1,000 DOLS FINE.

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FOSTER SHOWED THE WITNESS ONE OF THE CABLES, APPARENTLY FROM BANGKOK, AND SAID IT PURPORTED TO SHOW WHAT THE THAI PRESS SAID ABOUT BORDER INCIDENTS. IT ALSO REFERRED TO A FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIAL CONFIRMING THE NEWS REPORT. "WHAT VALUE WOULD YOU PUT ON THIS DOCUMENT.?" HE ASKED.

"THIS COULD BE WORTH MORE THAN 100 DOLS" SAID MARSLAND.

THE DEFENSE ATTORNEY SHOWED MARSLAND A CABLE RECITING WHAT THE WALL STREET JOURNAL HAD TO SAY ABOUT VIETNAM'S LAWS ON FOREIGN INVESTMENT AND ASKED WHAT ITS WORTH WAS. THE FBI MAN SAID, "PERSONALLY, I WOULDN'T BE INTERESTED IN THIS CABLE. LESS THAN 100 DOLS."

THE DEFENSE THEN PRESSED MARSLAND ABOUT THE VALUE OF ANOTHER CABLE DEALING WITH VIETNAM'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND RUSSIA. WHEN FOSTER ASKED THE FBI MAN WHAT IT WAS WORTH, MARSLAND SAID, "IT IS OF VALUE TO COUNTER-INTELLIGENCE PEOPLE TO KNOW THAT THE U.S. HAS A THIRD-WORLD SOURCE IN HANOI. I'D PAY MORE THAN 100 DOLS FOR THIS ONE."

AMBASSADOR JOHN E. REINHARDT, HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS AGENCY (FORMERLY USIA), TESTIFIED THAT HE DID NOT KNOW HUMPHREY ALTHOUGH HE RECOGNIZED HIM FROM SEEING HIM AT WORK BEFORE THE ARREST. HE DENIED THAT HE

HE HAD EVER DIRECTED HUMPHREY TO KEEP TRACK OF VIETNAMESE DEVELOPMENTS.

REINHARDT TESTIFIED AFTER RAYMOND HARVEY, AN ICA HISTORIAN, TESTIFIED THAT HUMPHREY HAD TOLD HIM REINHARDT HAD ORDERED HUMPHREY TO DO THAT. HARVEY SAID HE DID NOT QUESTION THE STATEMENT BECAUSE HUMPHREY WAS CLEARED TO SEE CLASSIFIED CABLES, AND HE PERIODICALLY GAVE HUMPHREY ACCESS TO MESSAGES RELATING TO VIETNAM.
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END TEXT. CHRISTOPHER

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